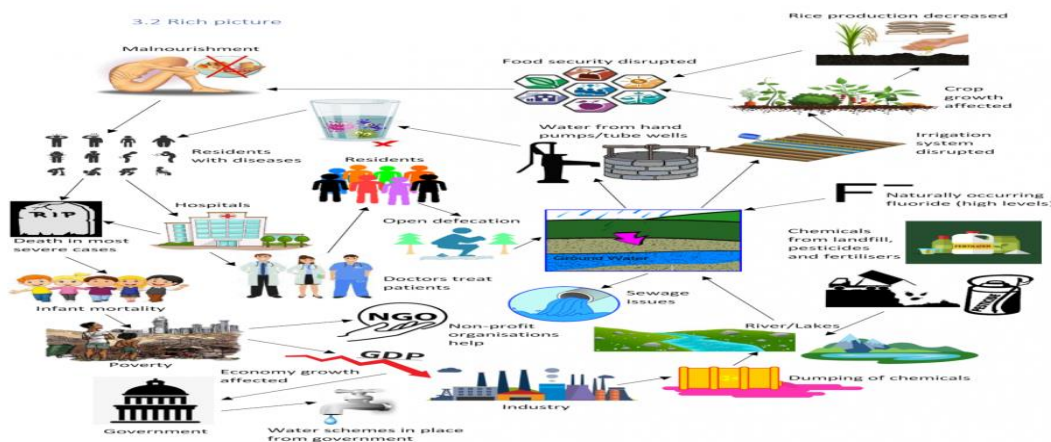


Capacity building workshop on Integrated strategic planning and institutional arrangements for policy coherence, leveraged by systems thinking for the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals



21-22 February 2023 (government officials)

Caudan Arts Center, Port Louis

Concept Note and Agenda

Background/context

While the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted the entire world, it has particularly wrought serious economic hardship on SIDS like Mauritius which is highly vulnerable to the external environment and the resulting multidimensional impact of the pandemic. Important sectors such as the tourism services sector, the financial and textile sectors have suffered particular hardships resulting in a totally disrupted labour market. Fiscal mitigation measures put in place to keep the economy afloat during the pandemic, including the wage assistance scheme, the self-employed assistance scheme, small businesses support and the food distribution scheme to vulnerable groups resulted in rising debt burdens, making the need for appropriate recovery strategies and access to development finance even more pressing at this time. Long-standing problems are also heightened by climate change, which means escalating costs from the impacts of national disasters. The increase in food and commodity prices seen in 2022, following the Russian invasion of Ukraine, has further exposed the vulnerability of those import dependent countries.

While a short-term recovery response following the pandemic has proven to be a necessity, it also presents challenges if only done with short-term lenses. Not only are the scale of financial interventions by Governments in response to the pandemic massive, but interventions aimed at recovery had to be implemented fast, without a possibility for a thorough analysis of the extent to which the immediate crisis response was aligned with a longer-term national development planning for more resilient, inclusive, and sustainable development, with a strong emphasis on climate change adaptation. Time-bound national plans are intended to set coherent economic and socio-political objectives for overall national development and are often based on more collaborative approaches involving a wide range of stakeholders rather than top-down rationalist planning of earlier decades. Such planning is not so much a set of decisions as it is an ongoing deliberation among stakeholders that involve negotiation and renegotiation of goals, policies, and actions with the aim to reach decisions that are made technically desirable and politically feasible. Plans have typically a 4-to-6-year duration and are sometimes related to a longer-term vision document. The long-term perspective in planning is critical to attenuate possible electoral cycle change effects, help build more resilient societies and better anticipate potential risks with the best cumulative impact cross different dimensions of sustainable development.

Many countries, including Mauritius have expressed the desire to become economically more independent, while reducing its import dependency and improving its energy security. The Sustainable Development Goals can be used as an opportunity to rethink the development pathway and direct long-term national sustainable development efforts. The use of system thinking inspired methodologies can be valuable in identifying high-impact policies across goals over different time horizons while enhancing coherent policymaking. This can support governments in defining a pathway towards a more inclusive and sustainable economic growth. Finally, the development of a strategy is not a solution by itself if it is not accompanied by governance mechanisms that enable cross-sector collaboration and more coherent approach to the design and implementation of policies.

The then UN Resident Coordinator Christine Umutoni used the momentum created by the pandemic in 2021 to promote integrated, affordable, and inclusive response planning and link short-term to longer term development. This was done through a series of consultations on green/blue economy, on food systems and on regional collaboration that all emphasized the need to transform the immediate crisis response into a longer-term vision of a more resilient, inclusive, and sustainable development with a clear emphasis on climate change adaptation.

The Division of Public Institutions and Digital Government of UNDESA and UNITAR and in close collaboration with the Resident Coordinator Office (RCO) from Mauritius and Seychelles have provided initial advisory support through the development of analytical papers on strategic planning, system thinking and policy coherence for sustainable development in Seychelles and Mauritius. The papers illustrate the use of a system thinking approach in policy formulation and decision making and makes the case for integrated policymaking towards a more coherent implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The approach can offer opportunities and leverage points to transform development pathways to increase resilience and a longer-term perspective, visualizes how the crisis can be an opportunity to re-assess socio-economic and environmental performance and how investments can be allocated in areas that provide short -and medium- term resilience, while addressing the most

pressing concerns by the crisis. The reports also highlight the need for institutional reforms and an evolution of the policymaking culture. UNDESA and UNITAR presented the findings during a consultative workshop, called “Joint Initiatives Towards Green Recovery and Long-Term SDG Planning” on 10th February 2022 which was organized by the UN and the government of Mauritius.

The work undertaken by DPIDG and UNITAR since September 2021 has triggered the discussions on the need for better food security and reduced food dependency, the understanding of the urgency to address climate change while using the opportunities of coherent planning and the existence of a Blue Economy framework in Seychelles and green economy work in Mauritius to increase revenue and diversify the economy, all with a view to create sustainable, inclusive and resilient economic growth. The quality of institutions has also been emphasized to support the reform process that is owned by the government.

Following the presentation of the findings, the government of Seychelles and Mauritius requested UN DESA/DPIDG and UNITAR for further support towards a more resilient recovery and development strategy, in alignment with the recommendations as highlighted in their VNR 2020 to progress towards the implementation of the SDGs. This will include institutional reform aspects as well as strengthened policy and institutional coherence and support with the development of a national approach to integrated planning in the context of the national Development strategy preparation.

In support of the new UN Resident Coordinator Ms. Lisa Singh’s interest in strengthening the collaboration with the University of Mauritius, UNITAR and UN DESA/ DPIDG propose to organize a 2-day capacity development workshop with the University of Mauritius which touches upon the potential of the SDG framework for transformation and contributing to the development of sustainable, coherent, and inclusive development pathways. It is expected that this capacity building event would further strengthen the University’s prominent role in addressing the SDGs, its focus on partnership to drive innovation and possibly strengthen the collaboration between the government and the University to better link research with policy planning.

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Workshop objectives:

1. Strengthen the **awareness and capacities** of government officials for integrated planning, and policy coherence for the SDGs
2. Provide **space for discussion** on the needs of the Government in terms of capacities for coherent national development planning

Learning objectives:

By the end of the workshop, participants will be better positioned to:

1. Explain the **difference between incorporating the SDGs individually** and a coherent **approach to the SDG implementation** and national development planning
2. Discuss **how Systems Thinking can be leveraged** to support a coherent planning
3. Analyze the **changes that Systems Thinking implies for both policy making and effective governance in the implementation of the SDGs**, incl. collaborations within Government and with external stakeholders

Timeframe: 21-22 February 2023 (government officials).

Target group: government officials from the Ministry of Finance, Dept of Planning and from other sector ministries and the National Statistical Office, approx. 50 participants.

Agenda

TIME	ACTIVITY
Day 1	
9:00 – 9:15	Opening and Welcome by the government of Mauritius Introduction of trainers from the United Nations Department for Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA), the United Nations Institute for Training and Research and participants
9:15 – 9:25	Overview of the workshop objectives Icebreaker on the value of SDGs for participants
9:25 – 10:20	SDG mainstreaming: national development planning 11 Principles of Effective Governance with an emphasis on sound policymaking Streamlining of the SDGs in development planning How can SDGs be mainstreamed through the policy cycle – approaches and country examples Breakout session: review current SDG mainstreaming in own government, the level and type of coordination of SDGs, current SDG reporting and use of performance information Feedback in plenary and Q&A
10:20– 10:45	SDG Fitness Test and debrief
10:45 – 11:00	Break
11:00 – 12:30	SDG mainstreaming: principles and monitoring

	<p>Roles of data producers and policy makers, official statistics vs. other data, data disaggregation related to LNOB</p> <p>Global SDG indicators and nationally grown SDG indicators frameworks, metadata, data gaps and opportunities from new data sources</p> <p>The importance of data: data disaggregation, global SDG indicators and national SDG indicator frameworks to reflect national priorities</p> <p>Evaluative evidence: quantitative (econometric) and qualitative approaches</p> <p>Breakout session on review of indicators for each ministry, its relevance, data sources and data production per ministry/ NSO – SDG</p> <p>Reporting back in plenary and discussion across ministries on SDG indicators review, progress tracking, disaggregation requirements to reflect vulnerable groups, interconnections between indicators</p> <p>Q&A</p>
12:30 – 14:00	Lunch break
14:00- 15:30	<p>SDG Acceleration: High-leverage policies based on interactions</p> <p>Systems Theory: Why SDG mainstreaming is not enough: from outcomes to policy making, from gaps to high impact policies, the need for priority setting the need for coherent policymaking, and the need for identifying high leverage policies across the system</p> <p>Qualitative approach based on Systems Thinking: introduction to the Causal Loop diagrams applied for Mauritius – presentation of the country report on “Strategic planning, Systems Thinking and Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development in Mauritius”,(2022).</p> <p>Breakout session and Q&A</p> <p>Feedback in plenary</p>
15:30 – 15:45	Break
15:45- 17:00	<p>Introduction to Systems Thinking</p> <p>Theory of Systems Thinking: Intended and unintended change/ outcomes, feedback loops and principles related to feedback loops</p> <p>Breakout ST-1 to identify intended and unintended change/ outcomes in current policies</p> <p>Feedback in plenary and discussion in group/ Debrief and Q&A</p>

	<p>Systems thinking: Principles of Systems as a Theory of Change</p> <p>Breakout ST-2</p> <p>Feedback in plenary and debrief</p>
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TIME	ACTIVITY
Day 2	
09:00 – 09:10	Debriefing on Day 1
09:10 – 10:30	<p>Leverage Points in Systems: Transformation for Sustainable Development</p> <p>Theory on Leverage points: place and purpose for intervention in a system, choice of indicators, and the role of stakeholders in a system</p> <p>Breakout Exercise ST-3 session on the leverage points</p> <p>Feedback in plenary, discussion in group, debrief and Q&A</p>
10:30 – 10:45	Break
10:45 – 12:30	<p>Systems Thinking: Transformation</p> <p>Using Systems thinking to inform National development strategy - national priorities and gaps in their pathway to meeting the SDGs, identify all stakeholders, incl those left or likely to be left behind and interventions that could respond to the country's specific needs</p> <p>Breakout session on national priorities and gaps to accomplish the SDGs, high leverage policies vis-à-vis priorities and related indicators, stakeholders and implications for governance, environmental sustainability, economic transformation, and social inclusion</p> <p>Plenary feedback and discussion + Q&A</p>
12:30 – 14:00	Lunch break
14:00- 16:40	<p>SDGs Acceleration: Institutional coherence as a precondition for coherent policymaking: the case for strengthened collaboration</p> <p>Revisiting SDG Governance and Inter-ministerial collaboration based on CLD analysis</p>

	<p>Stakeholder’s engagement and their roles in implementation: identification, analysis, mapping of stakeholders against CLD and methods</p> <p>Policy coherence and Institutional readiness for policy coherence in Mauritius</p> <p>Breakout session: Readiness Assessment on Institutional Arrangements for Policy Coherence to Implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development</p> <p>Final discussion on future capacity needs</p> <p>General discussion on future capacity needs in connection with long-term strategic development planning and foresight, systems thinking, institutional and policy coherence, monitoring & data, policy evaluation, science and policy interface.</p>
16 :40 – 16 :50	Workshop Evaluation
16:50 – 17 :00	Wrap up